

PSYCHOLOGICAL DEPRIVATION AMONG ORPHANS: LEARNING FROM THE FIELD

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Abstract: In most of the countries in the world, the conditions of the orphans are very difficult. According to UNICEF, the number of orphans is increasing every year. There are many reasons behind this like wars, epidemics, national disasters, floods, earthquakes, hunger etc. In India too, the number of orphans is increasing every year. This article aimed to study the present situations of orphans. As a part of the study, many orphanages in Kerala were visited. The investigator collected number of information through direct experiences from what was seen and known. The Investigator had the opportunity to talk and interview with many Orphan children. Each cases were recorded by the Investigator. From that, the Investigator describes 4 cases that seemed to be very important. After going through each cases, we can see, Orphan children in Kerala suffer from many social and psychological problems. Government and Society needs to address these issues.

Key words - Orphan, Social Problems, Abandoned, Psychological deprivation.

Background

In many parts of the world, the social and emotional issues that Orphan children experiences are very heartbreaking. Orphan's status in different parts of India is not different. The Investigator visited various orphans in many regions of Kerala to study their social and mental conditions. The information received directly from the orphans is compiled as a case report. The key objective of the Case Report is to identify social and psychological problems of the Orphan children of Kerala.

Who is an Orphan?

Orphan means is 'someone whose parents have died, are unknown, or have permanently abandoned them'. The common usage about orphans is 'only a child who has lost both parents due to death is called an orphan'. And another common use, 'an orphan does not have any surviving parent to care for them'.

Various definitions identified from the different Organizations. One legal definition used in the United States is a minor bereft through "death or disappearance of, abandonment or desertion by, or separation or loss from, both parents".

According to UNICEF and their Global partners defined as "a child under 18 years of age who has lost one or both parents to any cause of death." On the base of this definition, roughly 140 million orphans in 2015 exist in World, It is comprising '61 million in Asia, 52 million in Africa, 10 million in Latin America and the Caribbean, and 7.3 million in Eastern Europe and Central Asia', (*UNICEF Press Centre*) The UNICEF says that, most of the orphans live in institutional orphanages in unbelievable conditions, if we are looking into worldwide Orphans are comparatively rare in developed countries, because most kids can expect both of their parents to live their childhood. Much higher numbers of orphans exist in war-scarred nations such as Afghanistan. The overview of the continent wise orphan populations is given below.

Continent	Number of orphans (million)	Orphans as percentage of all children
Africa	52 million	39.90%
Asia	61 million	46.82%
Latin America & Caribbean	10 million	7.68%
Eastern Europe & Central Asia	7.3 million	5.60%

(*UNICEF Press Centre - 2015*)

The Indian conditions of orphans is very pathetic. The international charity for orphaned and abandoned children conducted a study in India. They found that "India is home to 20 million orphans, and also this figure will increase by 2021." And 'The study was directed by SOS Children's Villages India, a charity providing family-based care for orphaned and abandoned children. The study has found that 4 per cent of India's child population of 20 million are orphans. Majority of these children have been abandoned by their parents. The organizer estimates that only 0.3 per cent of these orphans are children whose parents have really died.'

The main reason of the pathetic condition is poverty. That is why The high number of abandoned children among orphans. Undoubtedly, the same study reviled that, the states like Uttar Pradesh, Bihar and West Bengal had more orphans than India's richer states. Usually, the country's central and eastern regions were found to be worse affected than the north and the south.

The other main states such as Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh and Chhattisgarh are home to 6 million orphaned children under the age of 18. On the base of these statistics these states will probably be home to 7.1 million orphans in 2021. while comparing the eastern region, 'containing Bihar, Orissa, Jharkhand and West Bengal, now houses 5.2 million orphans, it may be in 6 million by 2021. Each of these areas is home to more than twice the number of orphans living in either the north or west regions.'

The estimated 41 per cent of India's population is under the age of 18, it is the largest child population in the world. According to the study, an additional 13 per cent of these children live in single-parent homes, which are also socially and economically marginalized. About 85 per cent of children from single-parent houses alive with their mothers.

The study (International charity for orphaned and abandoned children - 2011) quoted that the 'future trends on progress toward reducing the number of orphans are mixed. While the total number of orphans is set to increase from 20 million to 24 million by 2021, the relative number, or proportion, is expected to fall'.

The Kerala state is more or less at par with the developed countries of the world in the socio-economic and cultural fronts. But several socio – economic indicators during the recent past have shown a changing mindset of the people of Kerala regarding their attitude towards the weaker sections of the society, the orphans, the aged and their wellbeing. The registered orphanages are 905, and 39501 Orphans in the state, it is under the direct control of Orphanage Control Board.

District wise no of orphanages and Orphans in Kerala

Sl. No	Name of District	No of Orphanages	Sanctioned Strength	Present Strength
1	Kasaragod	36	2912	1647
2	Kannur	64	4023	2001
3	Wayanad	30	2129	1479
4	Kozhikode	63	7249	4706
5	Malappuram	103	12214	6823
6	Palakkad	76	5710	3822
7	Thrissur	90	5733	3572
8	Ernakulum	120	6890	3541
9	Idukki	51	2250	1673
10	Kottayam	59	3460	2289
11	Alappuzha	30	2128	1142
12	Pathanamthitta	38	1527	1032
13	Kollam	56	3236	2126
14	Thiruvananthapuram	89	5067	3648
	Total	905	64528	39501

(Social justice department, Government of Kerala board of control for Orphanages and other charitable homes 30/04/2019)

The reason behind the establishment of an orphanage is to provide an atmosphere of a loving home (love, care, security, education, and guidance) for orphans, semi-orphans, destitute, and children from very poor homes; irrespective of caste, creed or community and to assist the child to grow to a better integrated life. It is envisaged that the orphans get relief by receiving accommodation, food, clothing, and medical aids and the poor and the infirm children are treated and uplifted for a normal life. In short, it is to provide normal life like others and give compensatory educational mechanism for the orphans. On the actual experience of the researcher the reality is just opposite to the vision of the orphanages for which they are constituted.

As part of the study the investigator met many orphans and found many of them who were facing various psychological and mental issues, frequent abandonment from the society and poor socio economic circumstances. the investigator collected several representative cases and here the researcher presents a series of empirical cases of orphans who confront psycho social problems in their daily lives.

Case Presentation

Case 1

Ebadu Rahman (not in original name), a 13-year-old boy, living in a small village in Karnataka. He was born in a poor family and his father and mother were divorced two years back. The reason for divorce his mother was, Ebadu Rahman's father had married another lady from Kannur district before marrying Ebadu Rahma's mother. Later his mother had a second marriage from Karnataka.

Following their separation, he was taken to the orphanage in Kannur district with the help of his natives. After that, his mother had not come to see Ebadu Rahman or inquired about him. The most difficult thing is that Ebadu Rahman's father's second wife's house is located next to the orphanage of Ebadu Rahman. His father had 2 children, a boy and a girl. The girl child studied at the same school where he is enrolled. And both of them are studying in the same class. Ebad's one of the most difficult things is when Ebad's father comes to sign at Ebad's sister's Progress Card, he never cares the educational progress and other matters of Ebad. Even he did not want to talk to Ebad. While Ebad's sister wears good clothes and living happily Ebad has neither good clothes nor good food to eat. She even does not speak to Ebad. For this reason, Ebadrahman seems to be disappointed at all times. Ebad is also away from the motherly care and affection since she is not taking care of him.

The investigator found the real problem of Ebadu Rahman as he is kept aloof from love and affection from his parents.

Case 2

Mufeed (not the original name) was born in Wayanad, Kerala. Her father died when she was 14 years old. She has one younger sister Farana, she is not only a sister but also a pair of unbroken friend and companion. Both of them sleep, eat meals and got to school together. The sudden death of her father made their life miserable since there was no way to live because the father was only one income source. She lived in quarters, but after the death of her father, she could not afford to pay the rent and frequently the house owner had to shout them. She was forced to move to an orphanage because of the death of her father. Mufeeda never talked to anyone since she was taken to the orphanage. The sudden demise of her father and the separation from the sister Farahan caused a major mental strain. Now the child's condition is not in a good position. She suffered a lot of psychological problems.

Case 3

Noahman was 12-year-old resident in Kasaragod district, 5 years back he was admitted in orphanage because of his family's poor condition and his father died when he was 2 years. After the death of his father, he was taken care by mother. Two years back his mother also died with cancer. There was no one to look after him after the death of his mother except his grandmother. Later, his maternal uncle used to come frequently to see him and give him the chocolates and other daily needs till he had gone to Middle East for the job. But most tragic situation happened once while his uncle was on his way to the orphanage to visit Noahman met with an accident and he died. Only he had gone home with his uncle from the Orphanage to native place for two days. All hopes of Noahman's was over. Now he is not interested in studying and always sad and he is not playing with anyone. Noahman, doesn't have any hope of his future, He thinks better to die. He seems to have a negative attitude towards everything and does not try to commit suicide believing that it is a religious mistake.

Case 4

Sumayya was 11 – years old young girl when she was admitted in Orphanage. She came from Wayanad district, her father has left her mother 5 years back and did not know whether he is alive or not. Now her mother is living in a small rented quarters and cannot even see the daughter. She wanted to stay with her mother but she was forced to live in the Orphanage. In orphanage there is Lady Warden who is also divorced. That warden forced Sumayya to wash warden's clothes and do other jobs. Warden is a terrible monster. When Sumayya finds the Warden, she feels shocked, feverish, and has no words to speak, and they do all their tasks even during her study hours. Even when she goes to school during daytime, people will tease Sumaya because of her body is very fat. At the time of staying at home, she had a habit of eating bakery items but when she was in orphanage, she was afraid to ask warden to eat something. Now the main problem is the fear and worry. Fear to go to Orphanage by fear of warden, fearing to go to school because the children were "stuck" at school. Fear to ask for food since she had habit of eating always when she was at home.

Conclusion

Above four Cases shows that Psychological deprivation affects *all levels* of child's mind from deep unconscious layers (fear, guilt, anxiety) to self-consciousness (self-perception, self-attitude, self-acceptance, self-image in the future) and social relations (attitude towards men, women, family and its members, perception and understanding of others). So the investigator ready to develop a training model for resolve the minimum issues of the Orphans in India.

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